

**new beginnings
aren't all that new**

gaypasta

new beginnings aren't all that new by gaypasta

Category: IT (2017), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Fluff, M/M, Post Pennywise, Set in the future, because no one writes him and he's my Boy, mike's POV, spring time means a lot to mike, this is gay and cute so, two dumb boys take ages to figure it all out

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Characters: Mike Hanlon, Richie Tozier

Relationships: Mike Hanlon & Richie Tozier, richie tozier/mike hanlon

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Summary:

Springtime brings new life, new sun, new years and a chance to begin again. Springtime marks the beginnings of a lot of things, but Mike seems to know that what he thinks is a beginning, isn't actually a beginning at all.

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Author's Note:

i wrote this at 1am for @everheardofastaphinfection on tumblr. thanks Julia!

Mike wasn't sure how or when it happened. All he knew was that it might not have happened slowly, but before he knew it - everything had changed. It was like the change of seasons, you don't notice it day-by-day. Then suddenly it's Spring, and there are lambs and calves being born and the colour is back on the fields and the sky, suddenly you wake up and don't feel the need to don a dressing gown and the cold doesn't pierce through the floorboards quite as harshly.

Spring has a way of lightening people up, making people smile when they had been frowning all Winter. Maybe it was the start of a new year, maybe it was the baby animals or the snow and ice melting away as if it had never graced Derry at all. Maybe it was the long days, riding bikes until sundown or playing baseball until someone hit the ball too hard into the forest. It was usually Stan, he had a killer hit. Spring brought many sleepovers, usually at Bill's or Stan's - but Mike had convinced his Mother to let them hike out in the barn several nights, much to Eddie and Stan's initial repulsion.

Mike wonders if it happened that first night in the barn, when everyone stayed up long past their bedtime, with no adults to tell them off. It was possible, that it had happened when everyone was laughing at one of Richie's jokes (moreso Stan's retort), Bill's cheeks were streaming with tears. He remembers Richie laughing, slapping his knee and rolling back into a bed of hay - not giving a thought to the types of insects or rodents which very likely could have made it their home. His face was flush with joy and his teeth were spread wide on his face with a smile, and Mike found himself smiling too.

Maybe it was the morning after, when Richie bumped into Mike feeding the animals, a cigarette loitering in between his lips. The distinctive sound of a voice which had just been woken up had greeted Mike, a lazy but genuine smile had almost let the cigarette drop. Richie rubbed his eyes and took off his glasses, leaning against Mike's almost-clean work shirt. Mike had ruffled Richie's ridiculously messy hair and let him nuzzle into him for a moment. Maybe Richie was mimicking the newborn lambs nuzzling against their mothers for heat. Within minutes Richie had moved off, to go back to sleep no doubt.

Of course, Mike had realized, several weeks after playful flirting and baking Richie cookies and pastries thrice a week, that it hadn't happened fast at all. It happened slowly. Slower than the movement of time, slower than a child growing into their school blazer, slower than the sun moved across the sky. No, it had happened so slow, over the course of years, over milkshakes and board games and sleepovers and movie marathons. It had happened through the bloodshed and morbidity of the summer of '89, through the hushed laughter of their last sleepover before Christmas, through Eddie's last pill, through Stan's scars fading to just shines of pink, through Bill's grieving, through Ben's forlorn love-letters to Bev and through Richie's night terrors. It had crept up on the both of them, during the nights where Mike - who slept so lightly that a feather would have woken him - would rub circles on Richie's shoulder and sit with him in the cold body of nighttime while Richie smoked a cigarette out on the back porch or the nights where Richie would make him laugh so hard, cola came squirting out his nose.

Yes, it happened slowly. Mike didn't know he was falling in love with Richie Tozier until it had been so obvious that it hurt.

Mike relished in Richie's jokes and voices. They were tacky, and most often not particularly good - but on the days and nights where everyone had the ghost of *that* summer on their faces, on the days

where Stan would scratch at his face almost violently with a blank face, on the days where even Bill would be too exhausted to stop him - Richie's Irish Cop voice or terrible gags may not have made them laugh, but it made their shoulders sag a little less. Richie may not have noticed, but Mike did.

Mike noticed Richie an awful lot. And Mike noticed Richie noticing him too.

It had been slow, their mutual flirting. With a wink here, a suggestive comment there, even a baked good or twelve. Their mutual pining wasn't obvious to anyone (besides maybe Ben, who had known it all too well himself), despite the fact that it had been drawn out over a year. A full year had passed with Richie and Mike, who were definitely and undoubtedly in love, flirting and skirting around any heavy words or tender kisses. They danced around the subjects like experts, just narrowly dodging kisses and fleeting touches. Mike had almost kissed Richie once, they were alone by the quarry and Richie had made a joke that wasn't funny in the slightest, but it made Mike's heart soar and Mike had to force himself to take a step back and compose himself - Richie had noticed, and Mike knew that.

It was Spring when they kissed. Early morning, after the first sleepover in May, surrounded by daffodils and lavender and the sounds of lambs bleating in the background. There had been no words, just a quick flick of the eyes around their other sleeping friends and then their lips met, at the door of Mike's barn. It was soft, almost comically slow and careful, but it wasn't unsure. Neither of them were unsure. Richie tasted like smoke and morning breath, and Mike couldn't imagine it as anything else. It wasn't like tasting cinnamon or vanilla or whatever any of Ben's favourite romantic movies had suggested, it just tasted like Richie.

It may not have been the romantic idealization that Mike had been told it would be like, it was human, it was Richie.

It took the pair almost 3 more months to become official boyfriends. They spoke it under the stars in Mike's pick-up, it hadn't been a question - it was said as if Mike was reading from a book, announcing the next chapter and Richie had hummed into his shoulder, as if he was listening to a story that Mike had already told. And perhaps he was, perhaps they were boyfriends for the past year and three months without the branded identity, perhaps it had happened that time cola squirted out of Mike's nose. Nonetheless, eventually they got to where they needed to be, which was in fact, where they had been the entire time - it just took the both of them a while to figure that out.